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# ANNUAL REPORT

UPON THE

Health and . . .  
Sanitary Condition

OF THE

Norham and Islandshires  
Rural District

FOR THE

Year ending 31st December, 1925.

MARTIN'S  
PRINTING WORKS.  
BERWICK.



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NORHAM AND ISLANDSHIRES RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

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# ANNUAL REPORT

UPON THE

Health and Sanitary Condition

OF THE

Norham and Islandshires Rural District,

*For the year ending 31st December, 1925.*

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*To the Chairman and Members of the  
Norham and Islandshires Rural District Council.*

Miss Greet and Gentlemen,

I beg to present my Seventh Annual Report. This is for the year ending 31st December, 1925.

## GENERAL STATISTICS.

*Area.*—The area of the District is 47,072 acres.

*Population (1925).*—5,314.

*Number of Inhabited Houses (1925).*—1,316.

*Number of Families or Separate Occupiers (1925).*—1,318.

*Rateable Value.*—£72,351.

*Sum represented by a Penny Rate.*—£170.

*Births.*—The births registered during the year numbered 93 ; 46 Males, 47 Females ; 3 of these were illegitimate, 2 boys and one girl. This is a decrease of five as compared with last year, and it represents a birth-rate of 17.50 per 1000 of the population. There were no deaths following child-birth.

*Deaths.*—The number of deaths registered in the district during the year numbered 57. After correction, through information supplied by the Registrar-General, relating to transferable deaths, the number is 58. The death rate, calculated on the latter number for the whole district, is 10.91 per 1000 of the population. This is a decrease of 8 as compared with last year's total. 32 were persons of 65 years and upwards, 11 were between 45 and 65 years, and 6 were children under 1 year. This represents 64.51 deaths per 1000 births. None of the infants dying under 1 year were illegitimate.



### Notifiable Diseases during the Year.

				Total Cases Notified	Cases admitted to Hospital	Total Deaths.
Smallpox	....	....	....	—	—	—
Scarlet Fever	....	....	....	78	30	—
Diphtheria	....	....	....	—	—	—
Enteric Fever	....	....	....	1	—	—
Puerperal Fever		....	....	—	—	—
Pneumonia	....	....	....	5	—	2
Chickenpox	....	....	....	28	—	—
Erysipelas	....	....	....	1	—	—
Encephalitis Lethargica			....	1	—	—

### Tuberculosis.

Age Period. Years.	NEW CASES.				DEATHS.			
	Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary		Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
10	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	1
15	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
20	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
25	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	1
35	—	1	—	—	—	1	—	—
45	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	—
55	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
65 and upwards	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Totals	2	2	1	2	—	3	—	2

Three non-notified tuberculosis deaths fall to be recorded, so that the ratio of non-notified tuberculosis deaths to total tuberculosis deaths is 3 to 5. Attention has been called to the omissions.

*Summary of Nursing Arrangements.*—(a) The Nurses connected with the Northumberland County Nursing Association meet general nursing requirements in the homes. (b) There are no arrangements for nurses attending domiciliary cases of infectious disease. The Northumberland County Nursing Association have nurses stationed at Holy Island, Scremerston, Norham-on-Tweed, Twizel, and Cornhill-on-Tweed. Their services continue to give satisfaction to all concerned. The Nursing Association draws the bulk of its funds from private subscriptions, assistance is also given by the Ministry of Health, Northumberland County Council, and Norham and Islandshires Rural District Council. Supervisory powers are exercised by the County Medical Officer.

*Midwives.*—There are no midwives practising in the district, and consequently no subsidy to midwives by the Local Authority.

*Chemical Work.*—No retaining fee is paid in connection with chemical work in the district.

*Hospitals provided or subsidised by the Local Authority or by the County Council.*—

(1) *Tuberculosis.*—Tubercular patients from the district are admitted to the Wooley Sanatorium which is subsidised by the Northumberland County Council.

(2) *Maternity.*—No Maternity hospital is provided or subsidised by the Northumberland County or by the Local Authority.

(3) *Children.*—No hospital for children is provided or subsidised by the Local Authority.

(4) *Fever.*—No fever hospital is subsidised by the Local Authority, though there is an arrangement with the Berwick Sanitary Authority for admission to their hospital of fever patients resident in the district.

(5) *Smallpox.*—The smallpox hospital situated at Oxford, Berwick-on-Tweed, with accommodation for 3 male and 3 female patients has been closed during the year.

(6) *Other.*—There is no hospital in the district. Berwick Infirmary, The Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh, and the Royal Victoria Infirmary, Newcastle-on-Tyne, are the Institutions on which the district chiefly relies.

Any *Institutional Provision* for unmarried mothers, illegitimate infants, and homeless children in the area—None.

*Ambulance Facilities.*—(a) For Infectious cases, (b) for non-infectious and accident cases. Arrangement made with the Borough of Berwick-upon-Tweed.

*Clinics and Treatment Centres.*—None.

*Public Health Officers of the Local Authority.*—Part-time Medical Officer of Health ; part-time Sanitary Inspector.

### Sanitary Circumstances of the Area.

*Water.*—In this wide, rural area, the chief sources of supplies are from local wells and springs. In the villages of Cornhill, Norham, Scremerston, and Fenwick, which comprise 400 houses and about one third of the population, the water is distributed by gravitation to the houses direct or to standpipes. The supplies are constant. The water is pumped to reservoirs from springs and the possibilities of contamination guarded against.

Several of the farm-places and larger houses have also gravitation systems obtained by pumping from springs or wells.

The other parts of the district are supplied from springs and wells, in some cases with pumps fixed. During 1925, no marked scarcity of water occurred in any part of the district. The quality of the water is uniformly good.

At the villages of Horncliffe and East Ord, schemes are on paper in an endeavour to provide gravitation water supplies.

*Rivers and Streams.*—The watersheds in this district drain



towards the River Tweed in the west and north-west ; and to the North Sea on the east and south. There are about 17 miles of the River Tweed, into one side of which the district drains ; and five miles of the River Till, both sides of which form drainage outlets for the part of this district through which it passes. For a rural area there is no marked pollution.

*Drainage and Sewerage.*—Where there are gravitation water supplies and where water is carried from springs, underground drainage exists. Other places have cement channels for carrying away slop and dish water. Water-closets and baths are in use in a few of the houses in the gravitation water areas. All drainage works approved of by the Council are treated by the Septic Tank System.

*Closet Accommodation.*—In a large part of the district, the privy and ash-pit system prevails ; and when privies and ash-pits are regularly cleaned it may be claimed that they meet the sanitary requirements of a rural area.

### **Prevalence of, and Control over, Infectious Diseases.**

As regards notifiable infectious diseases, it is noteworthy that towards the termination of the period of five years under review, the number of scarlet fever cases increased in a remarkable degree. In 1920 and again in 1921, four cases of this disease were notified. In 1922 and 1923, the notifications numbered 15 and 16 respectively. In 1924 they had declined to eight, while in 1925 they rose to 78. For some unknown reason, 1925 was characterised by a marked increase in the incidence of scarlet fever in many widely separated parts of the country. Throughout Norham and Islandshires generally, and notably in the Sermerston area, where the bulk of the scarlet fever cases occurred, housing conditions often fail to admit of satisfactory home treatment. Fortunately, towards the end of 1920, the District Council arranged with a neighbouring authority for the admission of infectious cases from Norham and Islandshires to the fever hospital at Berwick-on-Tweed. Apart from the incidental expenditure, this agreement has worked well, and it is matter for congratulation that, despite the large number of cases, there were no deaths from scarlet fever in 1925.

It is gratifying that, in the course of five years, there have only been seventeen notifications relating to diphtheria. To facilitate promptitude in the treatment of this disease, diphtheria anti-toxin is supplied gratis to all medical men practising in the district. Fifteen cases of pneumonia have been notified since 1920, and there has only been one case of encephalitis lethargica. No notifications have been received relating to malaria.

*Dysentery or Trench Fever.*—The Northumberland County Council have arranged for the examination of Bacteriological specimens by the Bacteriologist attached to the University of Durham College of Medicine, and local practitioners take full advantage of the aid to diagnosis thus afforded. No use has been made of the Schick and Dick tests, or of the recently developed artificial

methods of immunization against diphtheria and scarlet fever. During 1925, the M.O.H. performed 19 primary vaccinations and two re-vaccinations.

*Housing.*—In dealing with housing, one can only recapitulate what has been said in previous reports. When contrasted with an urban centre, a rural area is slow to change, and there is no reason to anticipate that Norham and Islandshires will become a great hive of industry in the near future. Yet, despite its dwindling population, there is a marked shortage of working class houses and no matter in what state of disrepair it may be, an empty cottage never fails to attract a tenant. The manner in which its scheme for the erection of 150 houses was turned down by the Ministry of Health is such a recent memory that the district Council is not likely to initiate any movement to meet the shortage. Private enterprise, if interested, would attempt to do more than it has so far done, but with the best will in the world, it could only tackle the fringes of the problem. Overcrowding prevails to a considerable degree, and is mainly caused by limited views as to what constitutes a dwelling in which a working-class family can enjoy a fair measure of comfort. As a consequence, the two-roomed house is much in evidence throughout the district, while not a few families have to content themselves with the irreducible minimum of one room. Dampness and insufficient lighting are defects often met with. Lack of proper management and supervision by owners contribute to much that is inimical to health, but there are also tenants who appear to be culpably indifferent about the care of property. On the manner in which bad housing reacts on public health, it is unnecessary to dwell. While one hesitates to build data on insufficient evidence, it must be obvious to the least discerning that the expenditure entailed by 78 cases of scarlet fever must be considerable, and that granted better housing conditions, the risks of infection would be immeasurably lessened. A comprehensive survey reminds us that in days not so very remote, plague and cholera used to decimate these islands. Sanitation has so far triumphed that a recurrence of these epidemics with a fraction of their old-time virulence is unthinkable. Is it not possible to visualise a time when diphtheria, scarlet fever, and other diseases which exact a heavy toll from child life may be likewise stamped out? To many this may seem an idle dream, yet public health records testify that the dreams of successive generations may become the common places of the future. Concerted action may accomplish much, and without concerted action on the part of every section of the community towards better housing conditions for manual workers, any further improvement in public health statistics is impossible.

I am, Miss Greet and Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

Norham-on-Tweed.

*James McNeill*, Medical Officer.



## ANNUAL REPORT OF SANITARY INSPECTOR FOR THE YEAR 1925.

Miss Greet and Gentlemen,

I beg to report that during the year ended 31st December, 1925, periodical visits of inspection have been made to the various parts of the district.

No statutory notices have been served. Informal notices have been issued drawing attention to various insanitary matters. I have also given verbal instructions to those responsible to remedy matters requiring attention. These notices and instructions have been complied with.

*Conditions of Dwelling Houses.*—Along with the Medical Officer of Health, I have made inspections of the dwelling houses throughout the district and reports have been submitted thereon. The Medical Officer is dealing with this matter in his report. The principal defects found were dampness, want of light, defective ventilation, and general delapidation. Repairs are being carried out on various properties, and as time goes on it is hoped that a great deal will be done to repair and renovate the old houses.

*Plans.*—Plans for the erection, alteration, and improvements of property have been submitted to and passed by the Council at Duddo, Scremerston, Horncliffe, and Holy Island, also plans for new slaughterhouse.

*Water Supplies.*—During the year water supplies from wells, springs and other sources have remained good. On the private gravitation supplies repairs are regularly carried out. At the Council's water works at Norham everything has been satisfactory during the year. The Medical Officer is dealing fully with this matter of water supplies.

*Sanitation.*—The ash-pit and privy system is prevalent in the district. In many houses in the water gravitation area baths and water-closets are in use.

*Disinfection.*—Disinfection of all infected premises in the district has been carried out where any infectious disease has occurred, also schools in infected areas.

*Dairies and Cowsheds.*—Instructions for lime-washing of cowsheds and byres have been carried out, also for the removal of manure, and orders for observing the cleanliness of all milk premises have been carried out.

*Factories and Workshops.*—These number 34. No contraventions of the regulations were found.

*Slaughterhouses.*—These number 2. They are situated at Norham. Both are well kept.

I am,  
Your obedient servant,



East Ord, Berwick-on-Tweed.

*Sanitary Inspector.*



## Sanitary Inspector's Annual Report: Year ending December 31st, 1925.

[illegible]

## SUMMARY OF WORK EFFECTED, YEAR 1925.

### Sanitary Conveniences—

	After Letter or Interview.	After Informal Notice.	After Statutory Notice.	TOTAL.
Privies abolished ....	3	....	....	3
Privies repaired ....	10	....	....	10
Privy ash-pits abolished ....	....	....	....	....
Privy ash-pits roofed or repaired	14	....	....	14
Pail-closets abolished ....	....	....	....	....
Water closets provided ....	2			2
Water closets repaired ....	3			3
Sanitary bins provided ....				
Sanitary bins renewed ...		...	..	....

### Drainage—

New drains constructed ....	..	....	....	....
Drains repaired or recon- structed ....	....	....	....	....
Additional gullies provided	2	....	....	2
Old gullies replaced ....	4	....	....	4
Scullery sinks provided ....	....	....	....	....
Scullery waste-pipes repaired	7	....	....	7
Scullery waste-pipes trapped ..	..	....	..	....
Yards repaired or recon- structed ....	..	....	....	....

### Water Supply—

Sources closed or discontinued, nil.	No. of houses affected, nil.
New service provided	nil. No. of houses affected, nil.

### Rivers Pollution—

Cases detected ....	....	....	....	....	Nil.
Remedied ....	....	....	....	....	Nil.
S.D. Works provided ....	....	....	....	....	Nil.

### UNSOUND FOOD, YEAR 1925.

		Surrendered.	Seized.	Legal Proceedings.
1.—Beef (Home-killed)	....	Nil.	Nil.	Nil.
2.—Beef (imported)	....	”	”	”
3.—Mutton (home-killed)	....	”	”	”
4.—Mutton (imported)	....	”	”	”
5.—Pork	....	”	”	”
6.—Game	....	”	”	”
7.—Poultry	....	”	”	”
8.—Fish	....	”	”	”
9.—Fruit	....	”	”	”
10.—Canned Goods, tins or cases		”	”	”
11.—Bacon.	....	”	”	”
12.—Cheese	....	”	”	”
13.—Butter	....	”	”	”
14.—Lard	....	”	”	”
15.—Other Foods	....	”	”	”

### FOOD AND DRUGS ACTS.

Samples taken.      Analysis.      Remarks as to action taken, and result.

Nil.



# HOUSING (INSPECTION OF DISTRICT) REGULATIONS, 1910.

## RETURN FOR YEAR 1925.

		SUB-DISTRICTS.					
		Total	Norham	Sermerston Ancroft Allerdeen	Horncliffe and Ord	Holy Island and Beal	Shores- wood
Number of dwelling houses inspected	.....	152	40	30	19	11	32
Number considered unfit for "habitation "	.....	—	—	—	—	—	—
Complaints as to { (a) Householders	.....	—	—	—	—	—	—
"unfitness " by :— { (b) Parish Councils	.....	—	—	—	—	—	—
Closing { No. of "Representations to L.A."	.....	—	—	—	—	—	—
Orders { No. of Orders made	.....	—	—	—	—	—	—
No. of houses made fit for habitation.	{ No. determined after repair	—	—	—	—	—	—
	{ (a) After " Informal Notice "	—	—	—	—	—	—
	{ (b) " Notice under Sec. 28	—	—	—	—	—	—
	{ (c) " Closing Order made	—	—	—	—	—	—
No. of houses closed voluntarily	{ (d) By L.A. in default of owner	—	—	—	—	—	—
	{ (a) After notice under Sec. 28	—	—	—	—	—	—
No. of houses demolished	{ (b) Without " Notice "	—	—	—	—	—	—
	{ (a) Under " Demolition Orders "	—	—	—	—	—	—
General character of defects :—In the old houses there is dampness. Light and ventilation is also defective in many cases.	{ (b) Voluntarily by owners	—	—	—	—	—	—

## HOUSING ACT, 1890.

(a) No. of "Representations" as to Obstructive Buildings	—	—	—
(b) No. of such buildings demolished	.....	—	—
(c) Representations as to unhealthy areas	.....	—	—



